

Name: _____

A Bear with Glasses

by Guy Belleranti

Do bears wear glasses?

Of course not! However, there is a dark colored bear that sometimes has light circular markings around its eyes that look like glasses or spectacles. This bear is the Andean or spectacled bear. It lives in the Andes Mountains, and is South America's only bear.



There are many interesting things about the Andean bear. The markings are one of them. In fact, sometimes an Andean bear has hardly any markings at all. Other times it might have markings extending from its eyes all the way down to its chest. People studying these bears sometimes use the markings to tell one bear from another.

Although the largest mammal on land, males weigh up to 1,000 pounds. The Andean bear eats a variety of other vegetation



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is second in size. Some individuals eat fruit and vegetation

is its most common food, it also eats insects, worms and small animals. While they prefer not to hunt large animals, when food is scarce, the spectacled bear can bring down deer, llamas, and horses.

Another interesting thing about the Andean bear is that while it prefers living in mountain rain forests it also lives in dryer grasslands and scrublands.



Unfortunately, the Andean bear is losing habitat and food as lower elevation forests are cleared for lumbering, farming and cattle grazing. It then ends up eating corn from farmer's cornfields, and sometimes even rancher's cattle, to survive. This has led to increased hunting of the bear. Conservation projects have been created to try to protect the habitat of this threatened animal. Let's hope such efforts are successful.

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1. How many species of bear live in South America? _____

2. Why is the Andean bear also known as the spectacled bear?

- a. because it is so large
- b. because some look like they're wearing glasses
- c. because it has spectacles
- d. because it lives in South America

3. What are the two largest mammal species in South America?

4. Is the



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5. Why do farmers hunt the spectacled bear?

- a. They sell the fur of the spectacled bears for money.
- b. They fear the spectacled bears will harm their families.
- c. They want to move the spectacled bears into zoos.
- d. Spectacled bears kill the farmers' livestock and eat their corn.

6. How heavy is an adult male spectacled bear?

- a. about 180 pounds
- b. half as heavy as a female spectacled bear
- c. twice as heavy as a female spectacled bear
- d. ten times as heavy as a female spectacled bear

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Match each vocabulary word from the article with the correct definition.

_____ 1. circular

a. likes one thing more than another

_____ 2. markings

b. eating grass in a field

_____ 3. sp



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_____ 4. v

_____ 5. prefers

e. plant life

_____ 6. elevation

f. eyeglasses

_____ 7. grazing

g. lines or colors on an animal's body

_____ 8. conservation

h. the height of something above sea level

◆ **Now try this:** On a sheet of lined paper, use each vocabulary word from above in a sentence.

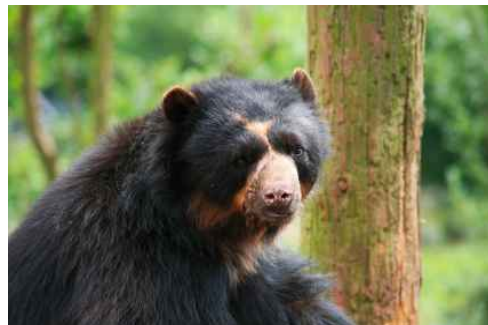
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In the article, "A Bear With Glasses" you learned that some Andean bears are hunted by farmers to protect their crops and livestock.

Write a pretend letter to a South American farmer in which you convince him or her to not hunt Andean bears. In your letter, offer different solutions that the farmer could do to protect his or her crops without harming the bears.



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ANSWER KEY

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